

PROJECT OF MAKING A HANDBOOK FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WITH USEFUL TIPS

Developing a Handbook for Students of Bachelor of Social Services that Aims
to Prepare Students for Challenges of Finnish Student Life

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ABSTRACT

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Aim of the report is to give an overview of a process of creation a handbook for international students named “Handbook for an International Student: Useful tips and Ideas”. The aim of the project is to share the experience which I gathered with international students. The book is aimed mainly for the first-year international students of universities of applied sciences in the Helsinki region. It will clarify main aspects that they need to take into the confederation, if they want to continue their professional career in Finland. It also covers topics that are useful to know when studying in Finland without strong financial support. This report illustrates problems that international students from non-EU countries face. It gives a comparison of living expenses in Russia, Ghana and Nepal. It elaborates the process of making up a handbook including goals, objectives, target group and stakeholders, ethics, Swat analysis, project organization and evaluation.

The project was based on the relevant resources such as internet informational portals, academic literature, qualitative research, comments from the seminars and feedback from a supervisor and international students. This project helped to look at some international students as people who belong to a social risk group. The handbook would be demonstrated for the first-year students in August 2017 via the Internet. I really hope that this book would be a helping tool for its target group and help students to quickly search for needed information, motivate to learn Finnish language, open new possibilities of learning and help to manage their time and money.

Keywords: Finland, social services, universities of applied sciences, Finnish language, motivation, work, time management, money international students

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1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

It is an open secret that there are many international programs in Europe, which accept students from many different countries. Finland is not an exception. Moreover, Finland until some point was a very attractive choice to study, due to a fact that education in Finland was free. International programmes in Laurea, Diak, Metropolia, Haaga-Helia allow foreign students to study abroad and get an excellent experience in living in different country. Anyhow these programs are not promising a work place for students. It does not make them less attractive or valuable, but from personal experience I could say that after graduation some of the foreign students feel a little frustrated.

The reason for that is the fact that some of the students expect more from a study programme. The logic is clear, if some institute offers a programme in English that means that there is a need for this programme in a working market. Especially in a country where everybody speaks English. Unfortunately, it is not always true. One of the reasons why universities make attractive programmes are the fact that they have to stay competitive in their share market and raise own rating. On the other hand, institutions need to get sponsored and therefore attract new service users, to keep jobs and to expand. (The world of university rankings 2015.)

Some of the students come from very poor families. It is their chance to explore the world, choose where they want to live and get an international education. Nevertheless their demand under this education in the Finish working market is very low. The first and the most fundamental reason for that is language. Despite the fact that Finland is very educated country, where many people speak English (Finland today 2015), Finish market demand a very good level of Finnish language. Moreover, it also happens that many students after coming home realize, that this international education is not very valuable there and they have to find other ways for professional realisation.

Another aspect of the relevance of this guide book is the fact that it will motivate international students to stay in Finland. Due to the fact that the population of Finland is

getting older it is very important to find new resources to serve the needs of society (Tanner 2010). According to ex-president of Finland, Tarja Halonen children of immigrants now reach the same goals as Finnish people. The good example would be Miss Helsinki 2017 Sephora Ikalaba(Snob 2017).

In this project, I would like to show international students their opportunities and possibilities from the very beginning and give them winks that they might find useful. It will be a guidebook, where international students can find useful information about where and how to learn Finnish language, where to look for a work, time management tips and other small tips, which could be useful in their everyday life.

1.2 Relevance of the project

Due to the growth of popularity of international educational programs, there are more and more international students come to Finland. That means that they make more and more of our society. Anyhow, many of the students do not fulfil their aims and cannot apply their education skills in Finland. Many of them start to work on a low paid job and many of them leave. It could be a very crucial fact due to the reason that during studies, students settle down and make plans for future which never come true.

What is more, many of the students came from very far away and put many expectations to their study, at any point as their permit ends they have to leave back home where their education can devalue. That causes frustration and disappointment as well as self-esteem decrease. It is an open secret that many of the students come to study to Finland not only for its education, but also for a chance to see the world, live in a place they like, get an experience of a very different life and use an opportunity of free education. (Zuzeeko 2012.)

Statistic shows that over 60 present of international students are employed. However, it is crystal clear seen that they are employed on the low-paid job in service industry, like cleaning. You do not need to make a different research, just look around and see who is

cleaning classrooms, hotels or metro streets. Moreover, this statistic includes a very popular IT education, where the basic language to work is English. Due to the fact that Finland is very attractive for IT studies, there are a lot of IT education programmes which make a huge share to the statistics. (Facts Express 2012.)

For every person, it is a very exiting but also a very stressful and difficult experience, as moving to another country and adapt to different society. Still, I believe, for international students from non-EU country it is a double load. The reason for that is the fact that they have to overcome sometimes thousands of kilometres, they face radically different type of living and moreover they have to provide their own finances without government help. I would also like to add here that these people can face discrimination in the society.

The reason many agrees on a low pay and hard job is the fact that even this little money that they get cleaning are more than they could get at home. Even the 3-room dormitory that they get for living is usually better than they can get at home. Anyhow, I believe that this kind of living and working crosses over the whole beautiful nature of a human to learn, to grow, to explore and to enjoy life.

This handbook will be created for those who decided to try their might in Finland. It might open some possibilities which were not so clear before. It can also motivate and stimulate for active behaviour, and different thinking. Life is not fair and some of us need to work 10 times harder to get a life we want to live, anyhow the time we invest in ourselves by our own choice can equalize inequality.

Another reason that this topic is in my opinion is very relevant is the fact that our programme is called Social Services. It is orientated on all people that are somehow pushed out of the society and have different troubles with social integration. In my opinion, international students are also making a risk group, as their socialization is only working as long as they are attached to their institution. After graduation, they are also pushed away from the life they want to live to the reality they can live.

From the first interview that was handled during admission to Diak many of us answered a question, why we want to study this programme. Many of us have answered that they want

to help people. I have notice that very often people speak not about concrete group of people. We often put into this phrase general disagreement with unfairness in the world. Later during studies, we find where we can contribute more and usually stick there. I would like to improve a tiny part of people's life who has studied with me all these years for so long and who do not get enough attention as a risk group, in my opinion. I would like to share my own experience and energy with them as my path in Finland was also not easy.

2 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

In this chapter I would like to demonstrate an overview of different subjects that are mentioned in the handbook. I would describe the methods that I have used for the research. I would present the results of primary and secondary data that I have used to open wider the core subjects of the project and show the need of it.

For the primary data, I used an interview of 6 international students, who have graduated international programme so that the project is objective. I have also used comments and feedback that I got from the thesis seminars and thesis supervisors.

For the secondary data, I am using the previous works that have similar characteristics. Academic articles, informational portals and books would also be used as secondary data for this project.

2.1 Interview

For this project, I have talked to 6 international students from non-EU countries, who asked me not to mention their names. For the Interview, I have chosen 6 people (3 woman and 3 man) for an interview. All of them belong to non-European countries, such as Russia, Nepal, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Ghana. I have contacted them via Facebook and held an online chat with them asking questions.

I have chosen people that were not in my Facebook friends list to make this sampling more objective. I decided to pick those who I do not have very strong bounding with. The reason for that is a possibility that all my friends and people I know are only my friends because we met with them in the same life situation. To make the research more objective, I picked people I do not know very well but still know them, so that they would openly speak with me and answer my questions.

The first question of the interview was “what is the most difficult thing they faced in Finland”. The second question was “what other problems they could think of when being an international student”. The third question was “how do they handle their expenses”. The fourth question was “what would they change if there was a possibility to turn back time”. And the final question was “how did this problem influenced on them”.

The answers to the questions were approximately the same. The most difficult they find Finnish language, the problems they think about are work, money and time. 2 people have also mentioned racism and different temperament of Finnish people. They said that it is hard to socialise with Finnish people. For the third question, 5 people have answered that at the beginning, their families helped them and 1 person said that family helps her all the way. For the fourth question all of them said that they would start to learn Finnish language more carefully. And finally, for the last question, there were several different answers. All of them mentioned the fact that if they knew Finnish language on a good level, they would have a better job. Therefore, it would’ve given them an opportunity for a better material status. Three people have underlined that they would also have a better social status, due to the fact that a good job gives an opportunity to visit places and have better connection with families and friends. In the paragraph below I would describe their answers more detailed and fulfil it with secondary data comments and own experience examples.

2.2 Expenses

When international students come to Finland they might face different kinds of problems. The first one that they face from the beginning is the financial aspects of living and education. First of all, the policy of Ministry of education is now present education in Finland as an export industry (Shumilova, Cai, Pekkola 2015). It means that the education of Finland becomes a tool for economy development of the country, which attracts finances inside the country. These could be fees for education for non- EU students, for second education, for Master education and also for living expenses.

I would like to start from the handling expenses, due to the fact that this is a starting point for every student in a foreign country. Five out of 6 people that I have interviewed told me

more or less the same story of coming to Finland. The scheme for studying in Finland worked like this: after a student from non-EU country is admitted to an institution in Finland, he/she needs to apply for a visa. To give a residence permit Finnish authorities need to make sure that a person is capable to keep up with the living costs of the country. That is why a person needs to show a bank account where she/he has enough funding to cover the living expenses. These living expenses are 700-900 Euros per month. Therefore, the bank account sometimes needs to show 9000 Euros for one year of study. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2016.)

This amount of money is very general for people who are living in Finland, due to the fact that Finland is known as an expensive country to live (Statistic Finland, 2009). The level of people's average salary is quite high, comparing to other countries. Moreover, it has one of the most reliable social policies, where people who are not working, still have a possibility to live quite a normal life without big hardships. (Statistics Finland 2017.)

Therefore, 700-900 Euros per month is quite a lot of money for other students. In this research, I would concentrate more on non-EU students, anyhow people that came from Spain, France, UK etc. To give a better image of the fact that Finland is quite expensive place to live, I would like to give an example of expenses in different non-EU countries.

I would like to start from Russia, as it is my home country. It is clear that when talking about financing of any population we need to take into the consideration the location. For example, the average salary in Petrozavodsk is 25000 rubbles which make 396 Euros per month with euro rate to rubble 1/63 (Currency calculator, 2016). Moscow average salary is about 66500 rubbles which is about 1055 Euros. Numbeo (www.numbeo.com) is a portal, which shows different expenses of different countries. It clearly shows that products and rents in Russia are not very cheap, 1/3 less than in Finland. Student get scholarship if they are doing well in studies which is 1340 rubbles in Universities and 487 rubbles in polytechnics which is about 20 and 8 Euros per month (Rusposobie 2016). The logic is that for an average family to send a family member to study to Finland could be a very hard experience connected with loans and debts. Collecting money for a future study is also not an easy option, due to the fact that it might take years.

Russia, as a first example, was not so extreme comparing to other countries. Let's take Ghana for instance. According to Numbeo portal, Cost of living in Ghana is only 18.66% lower than in Finland and rent there is 71.57% higher than in Finland. Anyhow the average salary is about 3393 GHS (Salary Explorer, 2016) which makes about 724 Euro. If we add to this a ticket to travel to Europe and the fact that many people there live in a very rural area and never heard about such a sum like 3393 GHS, we can make a conclusion that living in Finland could be very expensive for international students from Ghana.

Nepal as the third example of non-European country has an average salary from 6100 NPR, which is about 53 Euros. A good example of wages would be a salary of a public primary school teacher, which is about NPR 5,000 – 10,000 depending on area. (Dave 2012.)

According to Numbeo portal living expenses in Nepal is 59% lower than in Finland. That makes an average living cost in Finland for people from Nepal a huge amount of money. 9000 on a bank account for a Nepalian student is about 1045501.70 NPR which makes about 104 good salaries of a primary teacher, which makes 8 and a half years collecting money.

According to these numbers, we may assume the students that come to study into Finland are very rich. Of course, this is not true and there is a way how international students get their visa permission. The members of their families take a big loan, and a student shows this money to immigration authorities on his/her bank account. When permission is given, students pay the loan back from the same money. That means that they only need to pay for transportation into the country, for the first start and percent from the loan. Percent from the loan students have to pay, because immigration authorities are well aware of this scheme, and they ask this loan to be on a bank account for several months at least.

As a conclusion, it could be said that people can face very serious financial challenges in Finland. These challenges can influence on their life and on the life of their relatives. Some of the students also spend a lot of money on the way home.

2.3 Language and work

Another problem that is crucial for international students is language (Päälllysaho 2015). The next step of the plan of an international student in that situation is a quick search for work, which, as we know, might not be so quick. It is an open fact that to have great work opportunities here in Finland you have to know Finnish language. Another opportunity to get a job is to find something that does not need a language. Nowadays it is not so easy, due to the fact that more and more international students come to Finland and there is now a competition among them for a job place.

Due to the fact that international students do not always succeed in searching a right job position, which can answer their timetable and interests and they have calls from home that remind them that the sponsoring programme is soon going to end, they agree on any work, which can really be destroying for their social relationship. As an example, I would take one of my classmates, who had evening shifts all the time. I will call him/her N. Therefore, for the group meetings N was always late. Group members had to do N's work, and were not satisfied with N's attitude. N had a guilty feeling about it and started to avoid talking to others. At the end, all the courses were completed, but this style of life took N far away from the group, school and other social events of his/her life.

I also would like to add that self-esteem as a fundamental human component is suffering a lot. The reason for that is the fact that at home this international student had a different society status. Here this/her status, which many times is associated with his/her activity is very low such as student or a part time working cleaner. (I would like to underline that I have nothing against such a needed profession as a cleaner, nevertheless the social status is considered to be lower than a social status of a teacher most of the times).

At the end, we have a person with depths, with no Finnish language, no understanding of processes of a country and who needs to catch up with Finnish high living expenses which no scholarship like some other students. Moreover, many of international students have social problems as they become homesick, due to the fact that a ticket home is very expensive.

In the conclusion for this part I would like to say that personally I allocate these kinds of students into a social risk group. Even though it is own decision of every person to handle or not to handle these difficulties and come to Finland, it is also important to agree on the fact that the some international students have very hard life conditions. The life standard of students of non-EU countries is low, comparing to Finnish standards, therefore when they come to study to Finland it influences their families, social life and self-esteem. I can have an impact on the situation in general, but I can make a tiny change in one's life, by sharing with them my own and my friends' experience.

3 PROJECT DISCRIPTION

First of all I would like to specify what a project is. According to Roberts P., Guide to the project management, project is a unique set of events, which has specifically underlined objectives and goals (2010). My project is oriented to inform, educate and motivate the product users.

When creating a project I have used similar works as example for this work. There are many internet resources that are mentioned in the literature list I used to brows through the field of subject. In any case I would like to specify two main works that had a fundamental impact on my project. First of all I would like to mention Kanchan Gurung's and Asmara Riaz's work "Project making guidebook to employment. Developing a guidebook for students of bachelor of social services that aims to prepare students for challenges of Finnish labor market, 2015". This work was an example to me of how to make my own handbook, what important features I must have in a project plan and what else should I consider during the project process. Their guidebook aims to help international students in the Finnish labor market.

Second of all I used as a comparable work a thesis that was written by Suraj Chand "Internalization Finnish higher education. Literature review on the living scenarios and employability of international students in Finland." This work has many aspects that are similar to my theory part. It tells about possible challenges that an international student might face in a working market in Finland. This thesis has a very wide literature overview on the topic; therefore, I reviewed different views on the subject and used some of them in my work.

I have surf a lot of online resources investigating this topic and found similar information but in very different places. In many of them the main challenge of international students is language and work. They come as the main challenges in my handbook as well; nevertheless I have also included a powerful motivational aspect into the project. I have also included tips that I have not found in any resources.

Moreover I have found that a lot of articles and projects aim more for the future. My work also has a lot of information that an international student needs to consider for the benefit of the future, besides it includes useful elements as managing time and budget, which are useful for international student right now.

Finally I tried to avoid presenting the information as edification. I used a very friendly tone of a person who was in the same shoes with international students. I would also like to add that my handbook has a lot of information for the further use, and I have not found anything just alike in the internet. I believe this project is special and needed as it will find quickly its audience.

In this project, I will apply development orientated methods as the aim of this work is to produce a new product which might be useful for foreign students to help to achieve higher results during their studying period and after that. There is also going to be used primary and secondary data for the project.

The project is a creation of a handbook, which will be useful for international students, where they might find useful information about Finnish language, work, money and time management.

3.1 Goals of the project

Firstly I would like to say a word or two about what are goals in projects are. Joseph Heagney in “Fundamentals of project management” explains that goals could be compared with the mission of the project. They answer such questions as what I am going to do and for whom. He also states that it is important not to mix goals with the problems statements, as problem is a beginning a gap and where you want to be (2011, 47, 51).

The first goal of the project will be maintaining the student and professional life of international students. The guidebook would be full of ideas and information which could be suitable for almost everyone. It will also be a great start point for investigating their

opportunities in Finland. In the long-term the main goal would be to make first year students be aware of the possible future possibilities and opportunities.

Another goal for this project is an opportunity to broadcast their further learning. As and a twice international student I understand that there are a lot of information that come and go and it is very hard to search for the needed information again. Therefore, for a long-term period this book can be something constant. And every student can return back to it whenever they feel like it.

Finally, this handbook would also concentrate on managing some of the problems students are facing such as money or time management. For the long-time goal, this book presents a way of life style that can be suitable for someone. Therefore, this lifestyle will have an influence on the future results.

3.2 Objectives of the project

Objectives, according to Heagney, are much more specific compeering to goals of the project. They are very result oriented and they define a desired end of the project. Heagney states that objectives should be defined according to SMART description. Each letter is standing for important characteristics that objectives should answer. Objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic and time measurable. These characteristic will bring an author closer to the main aim of the objectives: achieve result. The author also comments that objectives are usually nouns (2011, 48).

The first objective of the survival hand book is underlining the importance of Finnish language. The reason for that is the fact that no matter what kind of good education, qualifications and personal characteristics a person has, he/she needs to speak Finnish for the majority of the work position.

Budget is a second objective, which is important when talking about students. It is well known, that students from non-European countries do not have Kela support in Finland and many of them are very limited with money. This book will show them some resources where they can save some.

The third objective is to give international students a field to explore. Due to the fact that that my experience of exploring could be counted in days and weeks, this handbook would really save their time and give a good start point for “where to look”.

Finally, there will be a mini chapter about time management. Due to the reason, that international students have school and therefore homework, families and works, it is clear that they do not have much time for something else. Therefore, the handbook will describe some features about how to manage some of the activities.

3.3 Target group

The clear target market identification brings a lot of directness to the project. The reason to it is the fact that according to Heagney we define our target group already when we set goals answering one of two questions for whom we are making this project (2011, 43). Thinking of our target group, we know what exact things we need to include into the work, what language we need to use, how we need to distribute the information to connect with the target group.

This project is oriented on mainly non-EU international students that come to Finland to study. As they many of them have financial dependence on their families. Moreover, they are very dependent on their visa permit, and therefore have to manage their future plans taking into consideration the time that they are allowed to stay in Finland. That also concerns European Union students who have to get a permission to stay in Finland.

The second target group for this project are international students from Europe who have a financial support from their country or from Finland and who do not have to think about visa permission. This handbook might be useful for them to learn Finnish and to find out other useful resources that might manage better their life. Moreover, they can find useful links for a job search or Finnish courses search. The third target group can be other Diak students who feel that they need to gain so motivation for a better working performance.

3.4 Stakeholders of the project

Due to Heagney, stakeholders are anyone who has any interest in the project (2011, 34). The stakeholders of this project might be the teachers of Diak, who can rely on this book when students ask them relevant questions. That would be a good tool to motivate students for independent work.

It is also possible that students and teachers of other polytechnics, where they have international programmed might be interested in this handbook, as they have students in the same situation as DIAK. This handbook is also a small advertisement of Finnish services, such as Finnish courses. Therefore, this hand book works for their benefit as well.

Finally, due to the fact there is always a demand for good specialists in the labor market, it might be so that employees, who see the potential in international students can be interested in this handbook.

3.5 Design and construction of the project

Design of the book is very important, due to the fact that I myself speak there in the book about different types of learners. Therefore I have felled it not only with practical information, but also with pictures, which can help reader to orient in the handbook better. Therefore the handbook has colourful design and easy to read text.

It has small chapters such as language, work, money, time management and conclusion where I would live my contacts for those, who would like to ask questions or give feedback. The design of the book would be simple and easy to read. It will be in calm colours with some pictures taken from free internet resource.

3.6 Ethics of the project

Project management has a lot of things to consider. Important issues to conduct are ethics obligation. Ready fix up ethics policy helps the members of the project know how to act in case the project faces ethical issues.

Due to the fact that most of the project would be based on my own experience, I have to mention that there will be some subjective thoughts and ideas. At any rate, I would make them clear and simple for every kind of reader.

Furthermore, it is important to say that I would try to avoid sharp corners of the research and stay very neutral. Additionally, this research will contain resources, which I used to avoid plagiarism. I would not mention the names of the people I have questioned for this project, due to the fact that they asked so.

4 WORK PLAN

Every project starts with a detailed plan. Therefore, the plan of the project will have a particular structure. Heagney underlines that without a good plan the project has weak control (2011, 30). For the base of my plan I have taken structure that is mentioned by Heagney (2011, 40). Underlining goals, objectives, stakeholders and target group I have made the beginning of my plan. The good project organisation deals with good role distribution. Due to the reason that I have made the project by my own, I did not have to pay attention on this a lot. Anyhow, I allocated the evaluation role to the interview participants, due to the fact that they helped me to outline the main subjects of the project.

I have started with the research of the topic and found to surf internet for the background literature. I have also started to prepare for the interview, as I needed to know for sure if my project is relevant for the target group. Then I have split the handbook into several parts and started to fill them with information.

First of all, there is an introduction, where I introduced myself, said a word or two about who could be interested in this handbook and why I created handbook. In this introduction I also mentioned that people are different and this handbook is not meant to be a guide for everyone. Anyone can find there something useful.

The second category is language. I started with the importance of the Finnish language and the motivational cheering. Then I wrote about speaking, writing, listening and vocabulary. Finally, I included there links where international students can practice Finnish language and find Finnish language courses.

The third step was “Work topic”. In this section I wrote about the possibilities to find work in Finland. I underlined there some features that are needed to pay attention on. The second fragment of that is a useful vocabulary, which is needed when looking for a job. It is a very important part, due to the fact that international students do not understand Finnish language as well to operate fast in the work searching engines, create CV or even make a step further to learn the language.

The forth part of the handbook is about money. It has only my personal guides on how to save money when you are in Finland. This part also has some resources, which international students can use to purchase cheap things or even have them for free.

The fifth part of the handbook is about time management. It also have very basic advises that I found useful and collected during my studies in Finland. They will help international not to waste valuable time on nothing.

Finally, I wrote a conclusion as an author appeal. Due to the very limited resources, I would not be able to print many copies of this book. Nevertheless I do not want this information that can be very valuable for one person not to reach him or her. Therefore, I would ask student to postpone the information further.

When the handbook is ready I will post it into the internet and give a link to it to the teachers. They might use it and forward it to international students. Unfortunately, I do not have resources to publish the handbook and spread the hardcopies among students.

4.1 SWOT analysis

To clearly present the risks and strength of the project I would like to present SWAT analysis of it. I would like to start with the Strengths. In my opinion there are a lot of strengths of the project. First of all, it touches much needed topics for international students. It could be a very helpful tool to operate for them. Strength of the project is the fact that is can have quite large target group and steak holders. That means that the project could be very valuable. The third strength of the handbook is the fact that I would try to make it short and clear without any excess, therefore it would be easy to read it and percept information. The forth strength of the project is the fact that it can be easily used long-term. That is why more people can benefit from it. Finally, this handbook can work as inspiration for the other students to research and make similar works for the benefit of others.

As for weaknesses, I would underline the fact that I have made a project by myself; therefore even though I gathered many other views from the international students, the project might be one sided and subjective. Another weakness of this work is the fact that I do not have budget to print as many copies as I wanted to print. Therefore, it will come in very limited edition. Finally, there is a possibility that what I have written in the handbook will not benefit for the target group.

The opportunities of this project are very large. If a feedback of this handbook would be very positive, it would be possible to post this information somewhere in the internet, so that another student who are interested, might have an access to it. If a book gets very positive results we can also think on printing more or spread the information via social networks.

The main threat for this handbook is to be useless for its target group. Moreover, there is a small threat that the project will not reach the target group as well as it supposed to.

4.2 Project processes

For the introduction, I have written a little bit about the purpose of the project and myself. That will give a reader a better picture of a handbook. I have mentioned there my experience and the fact that I do understand the demands that can face international students. I also mentioned that the handbook is not a guideline of how to live as the people have different situations in their life.

For the language chapter I have described why Finnish language is important to learn and what international students need to know, when learning Finnish. I have described there in short, the CEF system and what opportunities they can count on when they do not learn Finnish. The language chapter has sub chapters of how to learn language: Time, where I describe the importance of time invested into learning; Everyday something new, where I speak about non-stop learning; Do you know what type of learner you are, where I tell a word or two about VAK channels; Possibilities to learn, where I have subheadings as Vocabulary, Radio and TV, Internet and Speaking; and Find Finnish courses chapter, where I give useful links to find suitable Finnish courses.

Motivation to learn first went as a subtitle for the Language chapter, but at the end I wanted to make a separate chapter for it. The reason for that is the fact that motivation is the most important thing that makes us do things. Motivation and activity has a strong correlation. I have put there my own motivation inspiration for the language learning, which I hope, will help someone to continue and not to give up. I have also kept some motivational quotes of famous people through all text as they also can be very motivational.

The “work” chapter directly starts with tips that can be useful when looking for a job. I have used the tips from my own experience, my friends' experience and internet articles. They have very good motivational tone, and easy structure. The following subtitle in the “work” chapter is “Internet resources for the work surfing”. In this section I give all internet resources that I know for the job search. The main information I have taken from the Employment Office, and the rest from people that I know and my own experience.

The second bullet is a vocabulary for the job search. The reason that I have put this vocabulary next is the fact that most of the sites have very poor English version or do not have it at all. It is very important for the job seeker to know how to use a search engine. The fullest vocabulary I have found from High education connection net of Tampere web page. (Unipoly Tampere 2017.)

Money is a very small chapter, but in my opinion very useful. When I studied in Metropolia, I did not have any student money. Before I got a job, I have money which were sent from my family to me. Anyhow, I knew that these were very big money for them, therefore I saved on everything, even on food. In this chapter I collected small tips that can help a person to save some money.

I decided to make a final chapter “Time Management” due to the reason that I have covered quite many issues in this handbook. Surely a reader can choose just what is suitable for him/herself. Nonetheless, even one chapter of this handbook is a big chapter in everyday life that demands time. Therefore, I thought that it is wise to offer some good ideas for a person, who wants to include in life work, learning language, hobbies besides the study.

As a conclusion, I decided to add motivational sentences from myself, as I know that this amount of information can scare a reader away from action. I made it personal, so that the student could think of me as his/her friend who was in the same situation and found the way to keep up with so much new things. The idea was that if I could handle it, they could handle it even better as they have all keys that I looked for many years.

It is important to add that in the conclusion I would also mention the fact that it would be great if people shared the information among each other. That will guarantee that the work I have made will not be a waste of time, and it also gives opportunity to care about each other.

4.3 Evaluation

Evaluation is the most complicated part for this project. The reason for that is the fact that I was not flexible at all to collect the opinions of the book. Therefore, I will ask the teachers to ask general opinion about this handbook for international students. For me if this book helps one person, the work that I have done was not a waste of time. In any case, evaluation ways that are mentioned above would not be reflected in this paper, due to the fact that the handbook will meet its main readers after the final version is published.

Another opportunity for the evaluation is to collect opinions of the interviewed people when the project is 80% ready. The main question is if they wanted to have a handbook like this at first when they came to Finland. I would also ask them to rate the book from 1-5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent.

Finally, I would like to have own evaluation of the book, where I would rate my own project work from 1-5. For the evaluation, I would look if I have achieved goals and objectives, if a handbook

5 FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

When the project is almost ready I have given it to the people I have interviewed at the beginning. I have asked them to rate the project from 1-5 and to give some feedback about it. They have also answered a question, if the handbook had been useful for them at the beginning of their life in Finland.

The general rate of my work was 4,5. I have gained three “excellent” feedbacks and three “good”. All of the reads said that they would have wanted this book when they just came to Finland. Anyway I also had such a feedback that it would have been more interesting to read it if a handbook had more stories and examples. Another feedback was that I needed a designer of my handbook. Finally, one of the participants said that the book cannot be long-term oriented, as information needs to be updated all the time. One of the questioned people said that he would want to see more content in the handbook.

For the own evaluation, I would say that all the goals and objectives that were specified in at the beginning are achieved. Even though not much resources to use and time limits were very tight, I could say that I am satisfied with the work. I would also say that the project gave me a push of professional growing and hopefully would be useful for its target.

6 SUMMURY OF THE PROJECT

This handbook was created as a helpful tool for first-year international students. The idea of the project was to answer some questions that share information with international students. For the better structure of the handbook there was made a small research, which was an interview of 6 international students who have graduated from international programmes in Finland. These people from non-European countries answered questions of what would have been useful for them to know when they came to Finland.

On the basis of their answers, own experience and literature overview, I have produced a small handbook. This handbook has 5 important topics such as language, motivation work, time management and money. Around this topic, I have provided useful tips, links and ideas.

7 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are many characteristics of a social worker that are presented in theoretical resources such as flexibility, creativity, passion, empathy, trustworthiness, Competence or even sense of humour (Latonia S. Johnson 2015). These characteristics are fundamental and very true. Anyhow I would also add such a skill or a personal characteristic as ability to listen. Even if a social worker does not have a sense of humour, but he/she hears about a client's needs, and his/her further activity is narrowed to fulfil these needs, that would be, in my opinion, greatest help ever.

Another skill that I would like to underline is an ability to motivate people. The majority of people do not feel the need for work if they do not have a motivation. Motivation is a key to activity (Dean H. Hepworth and others 2010, 35). The activity of a motivated person is more productive and fast. An easy example for that would-be homework that we need to do until deadlines. The correlation of motivation and closeness of a dead line are very easy to observe. Unfortunately, when we talk about 3,5-year future, the "dead line" is not even seen on the horizon. That is why the motivation level is very low.

For quite a long time I have heard international students complaining that they are in need of work. Many of them complained that they need to know Finnish to work in Finland. I also know that school has done possible things to facilitate their studies so that it would be easier for them in the country. Anyhow, I believe that this is not enough for the majority of international students. The reason for that is simple. At the end of the third year only couple of students started to speak a bit of Finnish. The majority of the international students had a low paid job and a very low perspective to find a great work place that they would like. Let's face it, Finnish students have better chances and opportunities.

Working in the social service sector and having a person who is very frustrated about his/her activity in the future, I would advise him/her to do what he/she likes, wants and can. Moreover, it would be perfect if a person would do it for a benefit of better society. Therefore, I have chosen this format of a thesis work, due to the fact that I would combine

my skills, professional experiences and practical and theoretical knowledge into a piece of work which would be a help for people who I saw during 8 years every day.

After creating this project, I must say that the learning curve of relevant subjects, project building and improvement of the mentioned above skills were well improved. The project gave an opportunity to train all the development skills that and to use on practice. It also gave me an opportunity to be flexible in time and content. This project also was a way for self-expression on the base of academic knowledge and own experience.

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